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Coming Home.

"He is coming," said a maiden,
"From the midst of cruel war,
With the spoils of victory laden,
He is coming home once more."

Thus a maid with golden hair,
And with eyes of azure blue,
Said, as on the breezy air
Waving, her bright tresses flew.

Hope within her breast was high;
But, alas! hope oft brings sorrow;
Yea! the young hopes often die
Long before the expected morrow.

So the hopes we fondly cherish
At the rising of the morn,
Long before the evening perish,
And so leave us all forlorn.

But as weeks and months they fleeted,
Still beside the rippling tide
Those few words the maid repeated,
But in sadness oft she sighed.

Oft she saw his dark brown eye;
Oft she felt his sweet embrace;
As in dreamings by the sea,
Oft she saw her lover's face,

But, alas! she little knew
That that dark brown eye was closed;
That her lover brave and true
In the sleep of death reposed.

When at last the tidings came,
That her warrior lover brave,
Crowned with laurel leaves of fame,
Far away had found a grave,

Then no tear bedewed her cheek,
But her face grew deadly pale;
Not a word did she then speak,
Uttered not a single wail.

But for many a weary day,
Wandered sadly by the tide;
Gradually she pined away—
Heartbroken, soon she died.

FOR TWENTY YEARS.

A Christmas Story.

It don't seem much of a story to tell, though it was a tough one to live. You see, it was more than twenty years ago that my twin brother and I sold out our homestead in New York, and went to California to seek our fortune. All the rest of the family were dead, and we two were the more attached to each other for that.

Well, we tried mining, and we tried trading, and we tried everything we could think of, but nothing seemed to prosper with us; we only grew poorer and poorer.

Finally, we thought of the idea of separating, so as to work two fields at once, before the last of our capital was gone. There was great talk just then of some new gold region, and we agreed that one of us should go there and try his luck, while the other stayed in San Francisco and carried on a little business we had started there.

Of course, everything was partnership. I never thought of an interest separate from his, and he, I knew, felt the same.

Well, the question arose which of us should go. It wasn't very tempting, the mining life, and neither of us was anxious for it, and so we drew lots to see who should go.

The lot fell to me.

There was another reason why I didn't want to go, besides the uncomfortable life, but I wouldn't tell Rob; for I wouldn't drive him off to the mines, and I knew his generous heart so well, that I was sure he would insist on going, if he were aware of all.

But—well, the truth is, in a word, I was in love, and I couldn't bear to leave my dainty Susy to fight the world alone—she was a music teacher, poor thing!—nor for other fellows to fall in love with.

However, I submitted, of course, to the lot, and made my preparations to go. It was a sad heart that I bore around to Susy's rooms that night, and I couldn't bear to tell her; but, bless you! she no sooner saw my face than she knew something was coming, and she braced herself up to meet it before she asked me a question. After we had spoken of the weather, and the book I had brought her the day before, at last she said, quietly:

"Well, Ralph, what is it? I know you have bad news for me."

"It's bad for me, Susy, and I'm afraid it will be bad for you; though you know"—

I couldn't go on, and she spoke again, brave as she always was:

"Ralph, you know I'm used to misfortunes. Tell me at once."

So I told her, and she bore it nobly—as I knew she would—though I was the only friend she had in San Francisco, except her pupils.

But I had thought of another plan to make my going a little easier. That was, to make her my wife before I left, so as to leave her in the care of Rob, and relieve her from the hard life she was living.

After some persuasion, she consented to it.

So, a day or two afterward, we three—I had told Rob—went into a quiet church, and Susy was given to me to cherish and protect till death.

Brave little woman! how trustingly she gave me her heart, and how basely I failed her! How ready I was to believe"—

But let me go back. I took her to our cozy boarding place, which was indeed a home to us, installed her as its mistress, made every provision that love could suggest for her comfort, enjoyed the bliss of a few hours' honeymoon, and then left her.

I needn't speak of that. It was hard, I tell you.

Ah, well! I'm an old man now—older by sorrow than by years; but I shall never forget the fresh, dainty look of my darling, as I left her on the steps that bitter day—a bride in the morning, a widow at night. And I never did forget it through all the black years, though it seemed as though the very memory of it would drive me mad.

Well, I went to the mines, and I tried faithfully, eagerly, for my heart was longing to get back to her. But I could not succeed. Mails were not then established, so I did not hear from my two dear ones; but all the harder I toiled, for never a thought of doubt entered my mind. I was only too glad to have my dear brother to care for her, and save her from all rough contact with the world.

Finding no luck in the mines, I determined to push on into the Indian country, and try a little hunting and trapping—for that was good business then. I succeeded a little better at that, but wandered on, and finally came out at Frazer river, where the gold excitement had broken out fiercely.

I don't know now whether it was months or years—days and weeks were alike to me for a long time—but at last I was successful, and got together five thousand dollars in the yellow dust. Of course, my only thought was of my wife, and I seized the first opportunity to send off the treasure.

A miner, going home, willingly took charge of my little pile, and soon I begun to look for letters.

Bob's I could easily imagine—noble, manly, like himself. Susy's I thought of, and tried to fancy, hundreds of times, for I'd never had a letter from her. I knew it would be delicate and dainty, and like my pretty snowdrop.

Well, well, fancies may do very well, but they won't feed a hungry heart.

Day after day passed by, and no letters. My soul grew sick. I made all sorts of excuses for them. I imagined all sorts of delays. But the long, dreary days went by with leaden feet, and not a word came to the wanderer.

I grew morbid and bitter, and at last I wrote to an acquaintance in San Francisco, asking for tidings of my brother and wife.

The friend was not so neglectful as the wife and brother.

Soon—too soon—I got a reply. I can see it now, in letters of fire. "My dear fellow,' it ran, "I have made inquiries, as you requested, about your wife and brother, and I can only find that they disappeared from here a few months ago, telling no one whence they were going, but evidently having plenty of money."

What more the letter contained I never knew; that much of it was burned into my brain, and at that point I lost myself. They do say I was a raving maniac. Perhaps so; I don't know.

I only know I found myself an old man, blasted before my time, like a tree struck by lightning.

Yet, I could not feel angry. How could I blame him? Was I not mad to leave him, with his loving heart, to care for a tender young beauty like my Susy? How could he help loving her? Wasn't she all that was lovely? He was not to blame, poor fellow.

And she? Did she not love me, and was he not my twin brother? What so strange that, seeing his love, she should grow to return it?

What should I do? Should I search them out, and blast their lives forever? Should I come with my ignoble revenge and tear her from his arms? Would she love me for it? Should I get back my wife and brother?

Oh, no! I had been gone long enough to give her a divorce—she had undoubtedly got it, and was even now his wife. His wife! Oh, God, and I could live!

Weeks, months, years, dragged on. I scarcely knew they passed. Mechanically, I worked on. Fortune, no longer sought, showered gold on me. I cared naught for it, but instinct prevented me from throwing it away. Gambling was utterly repugnant to me. No form of dissipation lured me. I was an old, old man at thirty. I only worked and thought, and lived over the old days—my one brief day of perfect joy.

I never cursed them. The hurt was too deep and too sharp for curses. From the depths of my torn heart I pitied them.

Well, twenty years rolled on, and I had got to be forty-five years old, feeling and looking more like sixty-five, bent and stiff and gray haired.

One pleasant Christmas day, in my wanderings, I came on a traveling party of miners, bound to the gold regions. I joined them, frontier fashion, and was soon seated at their fire, exchanging news of the Indians and from the States. I chanced to mention my name.

"We've got a namesake of yours in camp," said one fellow.

"Have you?" I said, carelessly. "It isn't a common name."

"No; and that's why it's odd," said he. "Besides, you somehow remind me of him, though you're much older than he. By-the-way, there he comes!"

I turned—something, I knew not what, shot through me; I rose, and knew my brother.

My heart gave one great bound. I forgot my wrongs. I saw only my dear other self, the companion of my boyhood. I sprang forward.

"Robert! dear old boy! is it you?"

He looked at me eagerly - incredulously.

"Ralph! it can't be you!"

"It is!" I cried, and—well, I don't know as I'm ashamed of it—I embraced him like a schoolgirl, and wept.

And so did he, poor fellow, though he could hardly believe the wrecked old man was his brother.

But what struck me, even then, as strange, he did not shrink from me, nor act as though he had injured me.

"Robert," I said, when we were alone, and calmer, "I've forgiven you long ago. We won't speak of the past—let me only be happy in the bliss of seeing you once more. I'll never come around to trouble you."

"Forgive me?" he said, inquiringly. "I don't understand. You'll never trouble me—and we'll not speak of the past? Why didn't you write to us, Ralph? Your poor little wife"—

"Don't speak of her!" I cried, in sudden agony. "I can bear anything else—spare me that!"

"But, Ralph, there's something very strange here. Why didn't you let us hear from you? Why can't I speak of her? Since you are not dead—as we supposed—why did you desert her?"

"Desert her! My God!" and I fairly laughed.

A horrible laugh, I dare say, for Robert turned pale. I could see he thought I was mad. I resolved to control myself, and since we must have it out, talk it over. So, after a turn or two, I came back, and stood by him once more.

"Now, Robert, if there is any mistake here, let us understand it at once. I left you twenty years ago, in charge of my wife, in San Francisco"—

"You did, and I"—

"And you," I interrupted, "took good care of her, and did not hear from me; and she grew tired of waiting, and loving a shadow; and you—and you—loved her!"

"Hold!" he shouted, his eyes blazing. "Who told you that infamous lie?"

"And she," I went on, not heeding him—"she grew faint and tired; and she saw your love, and she—returned it."

Robert seized my arm as though he would murder me; but I went on, coolly:

"Hush, till I have done. When you received the money I sent, you were too far gone to go back. She got a divorce; you married her, and left the city. I don't blame you."

"And you!—you've believed this thing for twenty years?" he said, calmly now, though it was the calmness of a smothered volcano.

"I have."

"You have for twenty long years believed that your wife and your brother were infamously false to you?"

"I have."

"Then hear me, Ralph, while I swear"—and his form seemed to fairly dilate, and grow grand, as he said—"solemnly, that the whole story is a most infamous falsehood! That your wife is as true to you to-day as she was the day you left her, twenty years ago!"

"What do you mean?" I cried, frantically, overwhelmed by his manner and his words.

"What I do say, Ralph. Oh! there has been some damnable mistake! Hear my story. After you left us, I struggled on with the business, though not succeeding very well. Susy drooped at first, but soon grew cheerful, and begun to plan for your return."

His words brought the dear little creature so plainly before my eyes, that I sunk to the ground and covered my face.

"As weeks and months and years passed on," he went on, slowly, "her cheeks grew thin and pale, and a hungry look came into her eyes. I saw she was pining, and wrote letter after letter to you, but no word could we hear. There came to me in a simple envelope, directed to both of us, a draft of five thousand dollars, with not a word to tell how or from whom it came. Of course we knew it was from you, but whether gift or legacy, who could tell?

"We instituted new inquiries. Nothing that love could suggest was left undone. At last we were forced to conclude that you were dead. By my advice the money was invested in a farm some distance from San Francisco, and Susy went to live on it, while I started out on a sort of vagabond, wandering life, in hopes at least to find your grave—for we never believed you could be alive these long years and never let us hear. That life I have lived for fifteen years, returning once in three or four years to see to the comfort of Susy; and now I find you"—

"You find me," I interrupted, "a wreck—a miserable wreck, who has blasted three lives by his criminal weakness, his childish credulity in believing evil, and who will soon rid the earth of his presence," and I started to go, for verily despair had seized upon me.

That I should have believed that horror for so many years, and find it all a stupid mistake; that I should have thrown away my life, the blessed love of my true wife, the warm affection of my brother, for an idle scandal! It was too much to endure.

Robert laid a detaining hand on my arm.

"But Susy, Ralph! what shall I say to the loving little woman who has suffered so much for you?"

"Let her still believe me dead," I said, gloomily.

"Nay, brother; let me rather restore you to her. Ralph, go home, and let us be so happy together as to partly make up for these years of mistakes and error and grief."

Well, he persuaded me, and soon I was eager enough myself. Now the gold I had despised was valuable, as it could add to Susy's comfort. I gathered it up, and we started for home.

Home! I had not spoken the word for fifteen years.

As we went, Robert tried to prepare me for a change in Susy.

"She has had a life of sorrow as well as you, Ralph, and you must remember she isn't the girl of eighteen you left. She is nearly forty years old."

As I drew hear, I seemed to grow young again, and I wanted to rush through without stopping a moment. But Robert refused; and he wanted to get me into civilized clothes, and under the hands of a barber. He wouldn't take such a wild man of the woods home to the little, waiting wife.

So we stopped a few hours in San Francisco. I had my long white hair and beard trimmed, and my dress arranged to suit Robert, and hastened on toward home.

As we approached the blessed spot where my darling lived, I could scarcely breathe, and I dreaded to frighten her to death. In sight of the house, I sent Robert ahead to tell her, and I basely hid in the shrubbery, where I could look into the window.

There she was! the same dainty figure—the same lovely face; but dressed, oh, my God! in widow's weeds, and her bonny brown hair thickly sprinkled with silver.

I saw her rapid, eager conversation. I saw the color come quickly to her face, then leave it pale as death. I saw her turn to the door, and fly. And I sprang to meet her and—and—

Well, I can't tell about that.

On hearing her story, I found that Robert had left out the tale of his own griefs. That he had warmly loved a gentle girl, but never let her know it; had sacrificed his own happiness to spend his life seeking me, and caring for my wife; that she had married another, and Robert was forced to see her the very unhappy wife of a poor, miserable wretch.

And what said the little woman, when she knew that I had stayed away all these long years, had blasted her life, disappointed my brother's life love, made deep misery for four, by my stupid belief of a piece of gossip that, even to hear repeated, she shrunk from as though it would wither her? I always knew she was an angel. She said, though with quivering lips and tearful eyes:

"Dear Ralph, let us speak of it never again. It was a dreadful mistake. Let us be happy in the years we have yet to live, and leave it to another life to adjust the errors of this."

A New Picture of the Camel.

An American in Turkistan, in describing what he saw, in *Scribner's*, gives us this entirely new picture of the camel, the ship of the desert: Ungainly, unamiable and disgusting in odor, they are set down as a sort of cross between a cow and a cassowary. Seen in the distance, they make one think of a big overgrown ostrich, with their claw-feet and their long necks, which they turn about so as always to observe everything which comes by, and stare at you with their big vacant eyes until you have passed fully out of sight. They seem to stand cold very well, although they will take cold and die if allowed to lie down in the snow. Hence, during the winter on the steppe, their bodies are wrapped up in felt, which, when taken off in spring, carries most of the hair with it, and they then look entirely naked. If they get an idea into their heads that the road is long, or the weight too heavy, or that some part of the harness is wrong, they commence to howl. It is not exactly a groan nor a cry, but a very human, shrill and disagreeable sound; and this they never cease—they keep it up from the time they start until they reach their destination, varying their performances by occasionally kneeling down and refusing to advance; or if they do go on, holding back in such a manner as to make progress all the slower. In this case there is nothing to do but to unfasten the animal, turn him loose and tie his legs together, when he will begin to browse about, poking the snow away with his nose, and his driver will find him when he comes back. Camels are much too stupid to go home, as any other animal would, but they will continue to walk on in the same direction their faces are turned, without ever thinking of master or stable or anything else. They are very revengeful, and in the spring season the male camels are very often dangerous. Many instances are known where they have bitten persons to death, and they then have to be carefully muzzled. There was one comfort to be got out of them notwithstanding—their walk was so quiet and sauntering, that in the morning, when it was not too cold, we could read with ease in the carriage, as there was not motion enough to jolt the book.

After a Tramp.

A man knocked at the door of a house near Whitestown, N. Y., demanded something to eat, and being refused, threatened to set fire to the roof. The lady within refused to open the door, and quickly slipped out of the house by the back way and ran to her husband, who was at work near by. The tramp caught sight of the husband and ran off, but was closely pursued. The husband lost his breath and shouted to a neighbor to follow the fugitive. The neighbor ran for a while, but he too became exhausted after he had passed the word to a third man. The last man was fresh, and the tramp was led back to the barn in the rear of the house where he had applied for admission. Then the three men tied him up by arms and each of them gave him as many lashes as they could lay upon him.

The Trick on Robbins.

James Robbins, of Detroit, the *Free Press* says, has been missing for three days, but there is no anxiety around his house to learn his fate. His wife knows what caused him to disappear, and she is willing to let him get good and ready to come back. Robbins married a lone widow about four months ago, and they had not been wedded two weeks when he gave her a beating. She overlooked it then, thinking he would soon tone down, but in a week more he blacked her eyes. In brief, Robbins turned out to be a brute of a husband, and the ex-widow had the sympathy of all the neighbors. She is said to be meek and humble in spirit, and Robbins had no excuse for his brutality. Four or five days ago he knocked her down and started off uptown, and the wife crawled over to a butcher's to see about having Robbins arrested. The butcher, who weighs one hundred and ninety pounds and has a fist like a maul, knew a better way than going to the police, and he unfolded a plan.

When Robbins reached home that evening the house was dark and the butcher, dressed in woman's clothes and with his jaws tied up, sat in the rocking chair.

"Why in blazes isn't supper ready?" howled Robbins, as he stood in the door.

The butcher groaned.

"Grunting around again!" shouted Robbins. "What's the matter now?"

The butcher groaned again.

"You feel too high toned to answer me, do you!" growled the wife beater. "Well, we'll see about that. Just take this, will you!"

He struck out, but the disguised butcher caught his wrist, sprung up, and there was fun in that cottage. He choked Robbins almost to death, tied him up into hard knots and untied him, drew him around by the heels and the hair, and finally picked him up and tossed him over the fence into the mud. The wife beater had kept up a steady yelling from the first attack, and as he rose from the mud and sped down the street he seemed to think that Sitting Bull's whole fighting force were after him. At eleven o'clock that night he entered a saloon and told a story about six men robbing him, and half an hour later, as he was prowling around a shed to find a place to sleep, a policeman heard him saying:

"Nose smashed, eyes bunged up, sore throat, bruised all over and awful sleepy! What a deceiving person a widow woman is!"

Masses for Marie Antoinette.

On the sixteenth of October masses were celebrated in the expiatory chapel, on the Boulevard Haussman, Paris, from seven in the morning until noon. The occasion was the eighty-third anniversary of the execution of Queen Marie Antoinette. The chapel is small, and was full of people. It is situated in a little park, on one of the central streets of Paris. In this park are a few fine old trees, which seem to hang in somber sadness over the place where the unfortunate queen and her husband, Louis the Sixteenth, were first buried. With an obtuse sense of the fitness of things, a hack stand is permitted outside the gate, which, to keep at a distance, would be more in keeping with the regretful memories which cluster around the spot. This place of interment, at the time of their burial, was called the churchyard of the Madelaine, and extended from behind that grand old structure to this quiet park, which is all that is left of it. Streets, stately blocks and hotels, have usurped the resting places of the silent. The remains of Marie Antoinette and of Louis the Sixteenth were removed from this chapel, by Napoleon the First, to St. Dennis, where are the royal tombs of kings. Among the persons present at mass were Don Carlos and the Duchess of Madrid, General de Geslin, the Marquis de Dreux-Boize, Vice-Admiral Sairset, the Princess Trouvetzkio, and Madame Barbier, granddaughter of Madame Dussand, lady in waiting to the queen. The usher was full seven feet high, and broad in proportion, with three or four decorations on his breast, and room for more. He made way for the members of the House of Orleans with an air, and chairs and people moved quickly to either side. The ladies wore black veils; one of their number carried a magnificent rosary. The audience evidently lived in the time of Marie Antoinette, for all the antiquated rigging of her reign surely made its appearance. Don Carlos partook of the sacrament. Madame Barbier was maid of honor to the wife of Don Carlos.

An Ancient Statute.

An old statute has been unveiled in New Jersey which declares that all church entertainments, feats of legerdemain and jugglery, circus performances, variety shows, or any theatrical exhibition of any kind whatever are illegal. The preamble to the old statute recites: "Such shows and exhibitions tend to no good or useful purpose in society, but on the contrary to collect together great numbers of idle, unwary spectators as well as children and servants, to gratify vain and useless curiosity and corrupt the morals of youth and straiten and impoverish many poor families."

A case is being tried under the statute and it will go to the supreme court to test the validity of the section.

During the seventy-two years' existence of the British Bible Society it has issued 76,432,728 books, at the cost of £7,943,214 16s. 3d.

Items of Interest.

Charles Wood pleaded guilty to driving a sore and wounded horse in New York, and was sentenced to one year in the penitentiary.

Look out for the new patent peach basket which is coming into use next year. It looks as if it would hold a peck, but it is hard work to get a quart into it.

The population of Peru is decreasing, being less than three millions. The decrease is attributed to earthquakes, diseases, civil war and brandy, especially the latter.

An Indianapolis debating society has decided that the execution of Charles the First was unjustifiable. The prospects of the Stuart family are beginning to look up.

Don't think of knocking out another person's brains because he differs in opinion with you. It will be as rational to knock yourself on the head because you differ with yourself ten years ago.

Lord Chancellor Campbell, a few days before his death, met a barrister, and remarked: "Why, Mr. ——, you are getting as fat as a porpoise." "Fit company, my lord, for the great seal," was the ready repartee.

A New Orleans editor recently visited Boston, and evidently went around upon a tour of investigation. He says: "There are eighty-three uncles in Boston with whom young men can leave their jewelry."

The chief of an Esquimaux tribe, named Alank, arrived at Dundee, in Scotland, the other day on board the whaler Arctic, from Davis straits. He is young and intelligent, and is said to have been importuning the captains of whalers for some years past to bring him to England.

The deck of the Alert, in the Arctic seas, was covered with two feet of snow for economizing heat below. While the air on the upper deck was seventy degrees below zero, equivalent to one hundred degrees of frost, on the lower deck a mean temperature of forty-nine degrees was maintained.

The London Women's Printing Society, just established, affords girls an opportunity of receiving thorough instruction in type setting and the lighter branches of printing. After a month's trial the girls enter upon a three years' apprenticeship, during which small but increasing weekly wages are paid.

The codfish caught off the shore of Newfoundland are split, washed and laid on spruce boughs to dry. After the sun and air have bleached them white, they are assorted into "merchantable," for the best markets. "Madeira," for sale as second quality, and "dun," or broken fish, for home consumption. The fish exported to hot countries are packed by screw power in casks. Very large quantities are sent to countries as remote as Greece, Spain and Portugal.

Gloddaeth woods, near Llandudno, Wales, has been the scene of an extraordinary poaching affray. Fifteen keepers, bent on capturing a gang of poachers, hid in the gun-room, but the poachers, obtaining information of the trap laid for them, detached a firing party, which kept up a fusillade from behind a wall on the gun-room, while their comrades bagged the game. The poachers kept their would-be captors in confinement for an hour. Three were wounded; the remainder escaped by heaping up tables and furniture for protection.

The Basket Trick.

The trick known as the "basket trick," which Heller, the prestidigitor, introduces excites a good deal of surprise, as it is only natural it should. The conditions of the trick are simply as follows: A large basket is brought out and placed in full view upon a bench supported on four primitive wooden legs and leaving an open space between the basket and the floor. There seems no possible way by which a human being once in could get out of that basket without being seen. The basket placed by Mr. Heller and his assistant, Mr. Heller next brings forward a pair of overalls which cover him to the neck and which have no outlet at the ends of the sleeves or legs. When the overalls are drawn on and a hood drawn over Mr. Heller's head and attached to the main garment by strings, there remains no outlet for so much as a finger of the performer to get through. But as Mr. Heller is about to remove his coat for the purpose of donning this garment he remembers that he is in New York instead of Australia—that is his carelessly stated excuse—and a screen, which reaches up to the performer's neck, is placed behind the basket, and the performer retires behind this and effects the change. So far as one notices, his head does not once disappear during the time he is employed in drawing on the overalls. The last vision one has is of Mr. Heller's own face disappearing in the ample hood, and immediately he steps out from behind the screen, and, with the help of his assistant, climbs into the basket, the lid of which is closed upon him and locked. As far as any human eye can discover this is Mr. Heller who has just gone into the basket, but in the same instant—almost before the cover is down—Mr. Heller makes his appearance in ordinary evening costume at the entrance of the theatre and walks down the aisle, inquiring "what was being done with him." He immediately ascends the platform, opens the basket and nobody is within. The question is still an open one, How did Mr. Heller cease to be the man in the basket, and whoever the man in the basket was, how did he get out?